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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR JO](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQI ELECTIONS, MEHLIS
REPORT, TORTURE

SUMMARY

LEAD STORIES FOCUSED ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES THAT
INCLUDE THE START OF PARLIAMENTARY DELIBERATIONS ON
THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, EUROPE'S THREAT TO STOP AID TO
THE PNA IF HAMAS MADE ANY ELECTION VICTORIES, AND
DEMONSTRATIONS BY FAMILIES OF JORDANIAN PRISONERS IN
ISRAEL DEMANDING FREEDOM FOR THE PRISONERS.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES

Iraqi elections

Who opposes Arab elections? Yasser Abou Hilaleh wrote
in the independent, centrist and widely circulated
Arabic daily Al-Ghad on Sunday December 16: "With the
exception Al-Qaeda at the Rafidain, I have read no
statement or article that opposes the process of
elections in principle. Al-Qaeda considers elections
to be a violation of the Divine prerogative to lay
down the law. Others, who criticize elections express
dissatisfaction with the mechanism or with the
results. Yet the U.S. is unhappy with the results of
elections, a position that they expressed openly
regarding the victory of Hamas, and left unannounced
regarding the results of the Egyptian and Iraqi
elections. But what the Americans keep secret, their
writers in the region boast unashamedly in their
writings. We read in the Arab press some writers who
reject elections because they might bring Islamists
and who thank God that Rumsfeld does not appoint these
people as officers in his army because they would send
the F16s to strafe polling stations. It seems that Al-
Qaeda is not the only party that rejects elections on
principle, i.e. as a challenge of the Divine right to
lay down the law. Some people that the U.S. is the
sole party that has this prerogative and they do not
accept that it should share it with anyone."

Mehlis Report

The Mirage of the Investigation Committee: Prominent
daily columnist Rakan Al-Majali wrote in the center-
left, influential, pro-Palestinian Arabic daily Al-
Dustour: "The second report of the commission
investigating the assassination of the late Rafiq Al-
Hariri did not produce any fresh or conclusive
evidence, so it was necessary to extend its mandate by
six more months, with a reference to the possibility
of extending it further by a fourth term of six
months. And with the passage of time the prospects
become small of any dramatic revelations coming to the
fore that make it possible to discover the truth. The
work of the international investigating commission has
turned from a legal investigation aiming to bring to
justice individuals or groups that committed a crime
into a political report the loosely tries the Syrian
and Lebanese regimes. In short, everyone is embroiled
in a political struggle in Lebanon and around it, and
the extension of the commission's mandate has one
clear purpose, to keep the sword of Damocles hanging
over the head of Syria and others in the region, to
everyone's detriment."

Torture

Torturing for democracy: wait for Bush's decision:
Mwaffaq Mahadin wrote in the independent, populist,
opposition Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm on Sunday 16:
"The American Congress has just completed a debate on
the torture practiced by American investigators on
suspects and detainees in matters related to
terrorism, and recommended that such practices should
be limited and subjected to judicial supervision. It
is most likely that President Bush will refuse the
recommendation and reveal the true face of the U.S. as
a savage empire that does not refrain from committing
torture in the name of democracy. It is true that
George Bush is the one who does not lie regarding his

country's true policies and methods, and we should believe him more than the "democratic minority" that believes, with reason, that the President and his clique have inflicted serious damage to the image of the blond and blue-eyed Yankee. But this new reputation is real."

RUBINSTEIN